

## Note from the Chair

2015 is shaping up as another busy and significant year for the Chiropractic Board of Australia (the National Board). Several major projects have been recently approved by the Board and include the commissioning of a study to obtain in-depth qualitative analyses of notifications in 2013-14. The study will focus on building our understanding about profession-specific issues that are of concern to members and identify any patterns of practice that are posing risks.

The Board intends to use this information to partner with the profession, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), educational institutions and professional associations to strengthen chiropractic practice. Other important projects approved by the Board in 2015 will be discussed in future newsletters.

On another note, members of the National Board would like to thank those chiropractors that completed the *Online survey of registered chiropractors* in December 2014, with 868 responses being recorded. The survey feedback has now been collated and the substantive component of the response will be made available online to all chiropractors by late May 2015. Very importantly, the Board will include a *Questions and answers* section in upcoming newsletters to discuss many of the issues/comments highlighted in the survey including registration fees, the jurisdiction of the Board in regulatory and professional matters, continuing professional development (CPD), notifications and other matters of relevance.

We are committed to ensuring that communication between the Board and registrants is frequent, meaningful and productive. Even though the survey has now closed, please email us at [chiroboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:chiroboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au) if you have any comments or queries in relation to the Board's activities.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to share your comments with us via the survey!

### Dr Wayne Minter AM

Chiropractor  
Chair, Chiropractic Board of  
Australia

## Education and events

### Chiropractic Board of Australia practitioner survey results

In December 2014 the Board conducted a confidential online survey in order to better understand chiropractors' knowledge and perceptions about a number of issues including:

- regulatory obligations
- professional and ethical standards
- continuing professional development and education, and
- the Board's role, its performance and its communication with the profession.

This survey was a follow-up to a survey that the Board conducted in 2012.

### Survey results

The Board noted that 98 per cent of respondents stated that they were aware of the Board's roles of:

- regulating the profession in the public interest
- ensuring only suitably qualified practitioners provide care to the Australian public
- setting the educational, ethical and professional standards, and
- holding practitioners to account against those standards.

The majority of respondents (around 70 per cent or more) also rated the Board's performance in fulfilling these duties as good, very good or excellent.

More practitioners than in the previous survey reported feeling well informed about important regulatory requirements and 95 per cent stated that they would prefer the Board to communicate with them about these requirements by emailed newsletters and updates.

During 2014, the Board held face to face forums about its updated code of conduct and advertising guidelines in all capital cities. Of the practitioners surveyed who attended the forums, 92 per cent found the information useful and 45 per cent of practitioners indicated that they would be likely to attend similar forums in future. In terms of delivery, 66 per cent said that they would like to see the forum via webinar and 52 per cent on DVD.

### Practitioners' comments

Comments provided by respondents indicated that chiropractors are concerned about the types and quality of



continuing professional development being offered as formal learning activities. The Board accepts that there is some dissatisfaction and confusion about formal learning activities and will work to make the Board's requirements about formal learning activities clear.

A number of chiropractors also expressed concerns about practitioners they believed were practising unethically. If you have concerns about unethical practices you should make a complaint in writing to AHPRA via [AHPRA's website](#). The Board advises that in order to take action against a practitioner it must have evidence to support the allegations.

A copy of the survey report will be published on the Board's website in due course.

More information about the Board and its role and responsibilities can be found on the website under [About the Board](#).

### Survey questions and answers

**Q:** A number of practitioners asked about the high registration fees chiropractors pay when compared to some other professions in the National Scheme.

**A:** The registration fees for chiropractors reflect the actual costs of conducting the work of the Board and AHPRA in regulating the profession. This includes handling notifications made by members of the public. The income and expenses of the National Board are published annually in the AHPRA and National Boards *Annual report*, which is available on the [AHPRA website](#). The costs associated with notifications and related legal costs, particularly, have significant bearing on the total costs of regulating the profession.

The chiropractic profession is relatively small and therefore, large legal costs in prosecuting matters in the public interest have a significant impact on the Board's finances. The Board and AHPRA are continually working to increase efficiencies and reduce costs where possible. The Board is also working with the profession to ensure that all practitioners are aware of and comply with their responsibilities and obligations under the National Law. If there are lower rates of notification against chiropractors this will reduce the costs of regulating the profession.

**Q:** Several respondents requested that the Board advocate more on behalf of the profession.

**A:** The Board is appointed by the Australian Health Workforce Ministerial Council to regulate the chiropractic profession in the public interest. The Board has many powers, functions and obligations under the National Law, none of which relate to representing the profession. In fact, representing the profession is in direct conflict with the duty and obligations of any individual member and the Board as a whole. The practitioner members of the Board are appointed to provide professional experience, context, technical advice and input into the decision-making of the Board, but all decisions made must be in the public interest.

Additionally all National Boards have agreed to a set of risk-based regulatory principles that guide and inform their decision-making. These regulatory principles can be found on the [AHPRA website](#).

It is the role of professional bodies such as CAA and COCA to represent and advocate on behalf of the profession.

### ACORN research project invitation



Professor Jon Adams from the University of Technology Sydney, with the support of the Chiropractors Association of Australia (CAA), is seeking practitioners to participate in a research project.

The ACORN Project invitation pack is being sent out to all chiropractors this month. If you have received your mailed invitation pack, please complete and return it as directed. If your invitation pack has not yet reached you please look out for it. You can also participate in ACORN online if you prefer via [www.acorn-arccim.com](http://www.acorn-arccim.com). Your participation is critical to the success of this important three-year project.

A video explaining the ACORN project and practitioner participation is provided here:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFzHB7bifks](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFzHB7bifks)

#### Why is ACORN so important?

- ACORN collects and analyses information from practitioners and patients to help inform daily practice. ACORN contributes some very important benefits to the future of chiropractic in Australia and will enable clinicians to contribute to the advancement of clinical insights and improve the quality of care provided to patients.
- The ACORN project will help provide evidence around a range of issues including the safety, efficacy and affordability of chiropractic.

#### What are the benefits of participating?

The larger the number of chiropractors participating in the ACORN questionnaires and practitioner database, the greater the impact, validity and scientific rigour of the project findings.

You can also contribute to and support ongoing sub-studies on specific topics that will shape future research.

The ACORN project has been assessed for formal learning hours. The allocation of CPD hours is subject to an individual's level and amount of engagement.

#### What about my privacy?

- All data from practitioner questionnaires will be entered into a secure, password-protected computer file. All information will be analysed and reported in a de-identified manner. Subsequent research findings will not identify any individual chiropractor in ACORN-related publications.
- If you agree to become part of the ACORN practitioner database, your details will be entered into the password-protected database and your responses to the accompanying questionnaire will be stored. However, your involvement in future sub-studies will be entirely at your own discretion. Those who do consent will receive ACORN project newsletters and updates about different stages of the project.

How else can I help?

You can spread the word about the project and its benefits to others within your immediate practice and wider networks. Please feel free to pass on a link to the ACORN website ([www.acorn-arccim.com](http://www.acorn-arccim.com)) and encourage colleagues to explore the details of ACORN and consider participating.

For more information

If you still have questions or would like to discuss the ACORN project in more detail please visit the ACORN website at [www.acorn-arccim.com](http://www.acorn-arccim.com) and/or email Professor Jon Adams: [jon.adams@uts.edu.au](mailto:jon.adams@uts.edu.au).

Registration matters

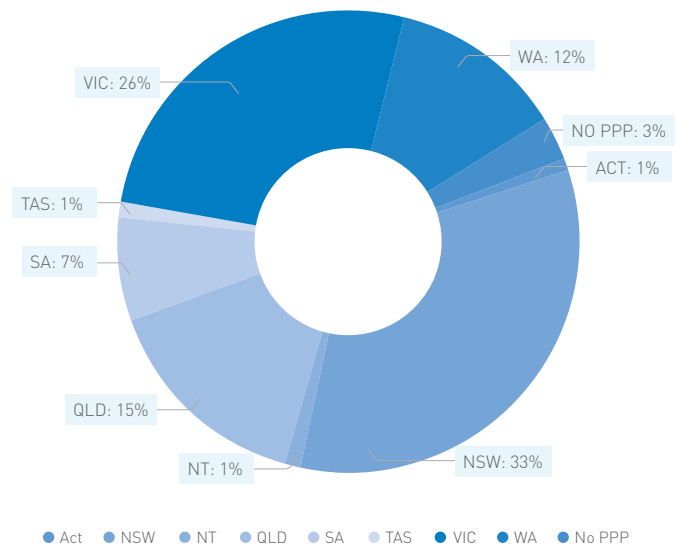
Snapshot of the profession

The National Board publishes quarterly updates of registration data for the information of practitioners and the community. As of December 2014, there are 4,977 registered chiropractors in Australia. Of these registered practitioners, 293 are non-practising.

Chiropractors – state and territory by registration type (December 2014)

State	General	Limited	Public Interest	Teaching or Research	Non-practising	Total Count
ACT	61	-	-	-	3	64
NSW	1,575	-	-	-	63	1,638
NT	24	-	-	-	1	25
QLD	749	-	-	-	22	771
SA	348	-	-	-	16	364
TAS	50	-	-	-	2	52
VIC	1,234	-	-	-	76	1,310
WA	589	-	-	-	15	604
Not Stated	54	-	-	-	95	149
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,684</b>				<b>293</b>	<b>4,977</b>

Chiropractors – percentage by principal place of practice (December 2014)



The largest number of chiropractors practise in NSW (33%), followed by Victoria (26%) and QLD (15%). For further information, visit the [About>Statistics](#) page on the Board’s website.

National Scheme news

Board Chair named in Australia Day Honours

The Chair of the Chiropractic Board of Australia, Dr Wayne Minter, was recognised with a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in this year’s Australia Day Honours.

The Member of the Order of Australia is awarded for service in a particular locality or field of activity or to a particular group.

Dr Minter’s award recognised his significant service to chiropractic health through educational programs, clinical practice standards and patient management.

Dr Minter has been in private practice since 1981 and was appointed Board Chair in 2014. His ongoing commitment to post-professional education has helped the Board support the profession’s transition to meeting the registration requirements of the National Scheme, particularly about continuing professional development.

Dr Minter has served both the profession and academic institutions in many other capacities including being a member of the NSW Chiropractors Registration Board, member of the Chiropractic Council of NSW, adjunct professor at Murdoch University’s School of Chiropractic and Sports Science, and chiropractic adviser to the Australian Government Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

The Board congratulates Dr Minter on his award and thanks him for his contribution to the National Scheme.

New approach to international criminal history checks

As of 4 February 2015, National Boards and AHPRA have implemented a new procedure for checking international criminal history to provide greater public protection. This

new approach requires certain applicants and practitioners to apply for an international criminal history check from an AHPRA-approved supplier. It aligns our international criminal history checks (ICHC) with our domestic history checks and aims to be fair and reasonable for practitioners. It also provides the Australian community with greater assurance by implementing additional safeguards to manage risks to the public from someone's international criminal history.

This approach was first announced in November last year, giving prospective applicants three months' notice of the change, and time to understand the new requirements before they take effect.

The new process for checking international criminal history aims to strike a balance between public safety and regulatory burden for practitioners.

For more information, please read the media release on the Board's website.

## Boards and AHPRA strengthen national drug screening

Mandatory hair testing will be routine for all registered health practitioners with substance-related impairment, under a screening protocol to be introduced by AHPRA and the National Boards.

Under the protocol, all health practitioners who have restrictions on their registration linked to past substance abuse will have routine hair testing in addition to urine testing.

Routine hair testing helps provide comprehensive information about the use – over time – of a wide range of drugs (not just based on the practitioner's drug-taking history).

The protocol provides a clear framework across professions for AHPRA's advice to National Boards about the management of registered practitioners with drug-related impairment. It will make sure drug screening in the National Scheme is evidence based, effective and up to date.

National Boards will continue to make decisions about individual practitioners with impairment case by case, based on testing standards set out in the protocol.

The proposed new protocol is published on AHPRA's website on the Monitoring and compliance page.

## Call for views on our regulatory principles

National Boards and AHPRA are seeking feedback through an online survey\* on the regulatory principles that were launched in July last year.

The Regulatory principles describe the National Boards and AHPRA's approach to regulation. The principles encourage a responsive, risk-based approach to regulation and support consistent, balanced decision-making. The aim of the principles is to foster a considered approach to regulation, reducing the risk of unnecessary and ineffective regulatory action, and focussing resources on areas where the result is harm minimisation. We are inviting members of the public, health consumers, health practitioners and all interested persons to

share their views on our regulatory principles through this brief survey. The survey has 11 questions and should only take about five to ten minutes to complete.

The responses to these surveys will inform the ongoing implementation of the principles and how they could be further developed and improved.

Complete the survey by 9am Monday 18 May by following the link above, or by pasting this address to your web browser: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LXQTHHL>\*

**\*Privacy:** When you click on this link, you will be taken to a survey on a third party website, hosted by SurveyMonkey. AHPRA is conducting the survey. The survey is anonymous. Responses to the survey will be used to review the *Regulatory principles* for the National Scheme. The information you provide will be handled in accordance with the privacy policies of Survey Monkey accessible [here](#). Information AHPRA obtains from the survey will be handled in accordance with our *Privacy policy* accessible [here](#).

## AHPRA actions to improve consumer and practitioner experience

Improving the experience of people who have made a notification has been a focus for us since early last year, when we commissioned the Health Issues Centre of Victoria (HIC) to undertake targeted research into the consumer experience when making a notification.

Since then we have made a raft of changes to address the issues this research raised, in particular to make our written communication clearer and easier to understand.

We recently started work on improving the practitioner experience of notifications. Earlier this month, senior leaders from AHPRA and the Medical Board of Australia (MBA) met Australian Medical Association (AMA) leaders about the way we manage notifications – including decision-making protocols, guidance and policies.

Key issues include the time it takes for a notification to go through the process; the tone and clarity of our communication; the need to better explain how the process works and why, and greater transparency wherever legally possible.

We will continue working on addressing the HIC's recommendations, and on other activities that will improve the overall experience of both consumers and practitioners who are the subject of a notification.

## Health ministers to consider National Scheme review report in August

Federal and state and territory health ministers will respond to the report of the review of the National Scheme in August this year.

Ministers met in mid-April at the COAG Health Council to discuss a range of national health issues, including the final report of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) Review. The independent review was conducted by Kim Snowball, the former Director General of Health in WA. It involved an extensive consultation process that included more than 230 written submissions and more than 1,000 individuals participating in consultation forums in each capital city.

The review aimed to identify what was working well in the National Scheme and opportunities to improve and strengthen our work to protect the public and facilitate access to health services. According to the report of the meeting, health ministers will consider the recommendations from the NRAS Review and discuss them further at their meeting in August 2015.

The *COAG Health Council communiqué* is available on the [COAG Health Council website](#)

### Security alert – keep your web browser updated

AHPRA and the National Boards are making changes to their websites to make sure that your information is kept safe.

From early April 2015, anyone using Internet Explorer version 6 (or an older version) to view our websites is likely to experience difficulty accessing our web pages and our online services.

To avoid an interruption to service, we recommend you [upgrade to the newest version of Internet Explorer immediately](#). It is available for free from Microsoft.

If you are using a new version of Internet Explorer and are still having difficulty accessing our sites please contact us to report your experience:

- Call **1300 419 495** Monday to Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm (Australian Eastern Standard Time).

If you are using Internet Explorer 6 we recommend you read our latest [security announcement](#) on the AHPRA website.

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## Keep in touch with the Board

- Visit our website at [www.chiropracticboard.gov.au](http://www.chiropracticboard.gov.au) for news about the profession and for registration standards, codes, guidelines, policies and fact sheets.
- Lodge an enquiry form via the website by following the [Enquiries](#) link on the bottom of every page.
- For registration enquiries call 1300 419 495 (from within Australia).
- Address mail correspondence to: Dr Wayne Minter, Chair, Chiropractic Board of Australia, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne VIC 3001.

